



Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 151

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, JULY 28, 2005

No. 105

House of Representatives

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN ED CASE OF HAWAII THURSDAY, JULY 28, 2005

ON THE OCCASION OF GLADYS BAISA'S 65TH BIRTHDAY

Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor one of my most distinguished constituents on the occasion of her 65th birthday.

Gladys Coelho Baisa was born on August 13, 1940 on the Island of Maui, Hawaii. She grew up in the plantation camps and can remember a time when no door was locked and no one was a stranger. She lost her father at an early age and was raised by her mother alone. Gladys graduated from Maui High School in 1958, where she was class valedictorian and a member of the National Honor Society. Two years later she graduated as a Practical Licensed Nurse from the St. Francis School of Nursing and began her illustrious career as a Licensed Practical Nurse and then a private duty nurse.

In 1967, having taken additional education at Maui Technical School in the accounting program, she began at the Maui Memorial Medical Center in the billing department. Within two years, Gladys was recruited to join the Maui Economic Opportunity (MEO) Inc., where she has been in a leadership position for 36 years and Executive Director for 21 years.

Gladys has demonstrated the highest qualities of leadership since taking the reins of MEO in 1984. When she became Executive Director, MEO had a budget of \$1.9 million and operated 17 programs under three major categories: the Community Services Block Grants, Head Start, and County of Maui Grants. There were eight key staff members and seven supervisors. Today, MEO expects to serve over 20,000 unduplicated clients through its programs and community partnerships and has 272 employees and a budget of \$14.5 million.

Additionally, in 2003, the National Community Action Partnership presented Gladys and MEO with its inaugural "Award of Excellence in Community Action", one of only four agencies to be so honored out of over 1,100

community action agencies in the nation.

Today, under Gladys' vision and enthusiasm, MEO offers job training, microenterprise business development, family development programs, housing assistance, welfare to work opportunities, Head Start, senior citizen programs, medical and life sustaining transportation, farmworker employment and training programs, immigrant acculturation, food distribution to those in need, youth programs, reintegration of inmates back into the community, and many other innovative and far reaching programs that have been incorporated into government operations and continue to serve the community.

Gladys wasn't content with just building up MEO. She saw a need to develop the not for profit sector on Maui and took an active role in the creation of the Maui Non-Profit Directors Association. This organization of over 50 dues paying member has become an important force in public policy discussions affecting Maui County, and a forum for training and information designed to strengthen each agency in their mission.

For almost four decades Gladys has selflessly given her passion, energy, and unending desire to assist the people of Maui and Hawaii. She has long been a leading source of "best practices" management and her colleagues honored her with their very first "Executive Director of the Year" award.

Gladys will soon retire from MEO for well-deserved rest and time with her family. I know this will be merely an informal retirement and she will continue to stay involved in assisting the Maui community and will continue to live by MEO's motto: "Helping People. Changing Lives."

Hauoli La Hanau, Gladys, and many many more!